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The NatureKenya Newsletter www.naturekenya.org April 2002

NATURALISTS' CORNER

MANGROVES

by Najma Dharani

Mangroves are a conspicuous feature in the tropics and sub-trapics, where they form a coastal fringe af vegetation between land and sea. Inventaries dane estimate the area af mangroves in Tanzania is 115,475 ha (UNEP report) and areas of mangroves on the Kenyan coast are abaut 53,000 ha (UNEP report). Mangroves are a complex wetland ecosystem, which can under optional conditions attain the stature of forests, with trees from a few metres up to 40m tall.

Mangrave trees are of several species in different families; nine occur on the Kenyan coast. They are found in river estuaries and tidal zones, and constitute an incredible adaptation ta the enviranmental canditians of entering salty seawater and escaping sweet riverine water.

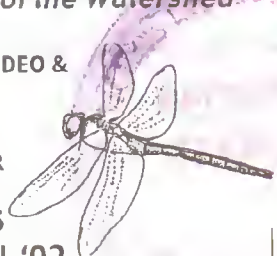
Mangrove trees live in silt-rich soil and have pitchfork-like raots, which grow out from the lower part af their trunks. The roots provide additianal support. These stilt raats ar prop roots also trap debris, which provides the trees with nutrients, and are important for stabilizing the shoreline.

continued on page 2

TALKS & VIDEOS

DRAGONFLIES

Guardians of the Watershed



DRAGONFLY VIDEO & TALK BY VIOLA CLAUSNITZER

Monday 15 April '02,

5:30 p.m. LOUIS LEAKEY M HALL,

Natianal Museums af Kenya, Nairobi,

Refreshments prior & Tawn drap aff

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

East Africa Natural History Society

(Nature Kenya)

Monday 13 May '02,

5:30 p.m. Louis Leakey HALL,

Natianal Museums af Kenya, Nairabi

The AGM will feature cancise presentatians by Nature Kenya committees and prajects

At the AGM, you elect an Executive Committee ta manage Nature Kenya. Members of the Executive are expected ta volunteer time and expertise to help Nature Kenya achieve its gaals. If you have skills and time to contribute, please request, or callect from the front affice, a nomination form.

Any business to be brought up at the AGM should be sent to the Executive Director, Nature Kenya, in writing before the end of April.

TRAINING

FUNDAMENTALS OF ORNITHOLOGY

A certificate caurse far bird guides and birders

Elsomere field studies centre, Lake Noivosha 23 – 30 APRIL 2002

A FEW PLACES STILL AVAILABLE – BOOK NOW!

Applications shauld be addressed to: Lawrence Maina at Nature Kenya or e-mail office@naturekenya.org

GREAT BOOKS!!

Available fram the Nature Kenya frant affice:

Field Guide to Common Trees & Shrubs of East Africa by Najma Dharani @ 1490/-

SPECIAL PRICE FOR **Orchids of Kenya** by Jayce Stewart & Bab Campbell @ 2500/-

Kenya Trees, Shrubs & Lianas by Henk Beentje

To those of you who still woiting to buy a capy – there are few capies left in stack, available @ 1750/-

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HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF THE WORLD Volume 7 Jacamars *to* Waadpeckers

Far an arder farm please send a self addressed stamped envelope ta the Nature Kenya front office or write to Lynx Editians, Mantseny, 8, E-08193 Bellaterra, Barcelana, SPAIN email lynx@hbw.cam ar visit www.hbw.cam

NATURALISTS CORNER

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Mangrove wetland ecosystems include forest, waterways, mudflats and saltpans. They support salt-tolerant (halophytic) mangrove trees, shrubs, palms, epiphytes (lianas, lichens, ferns and orchids), algae, fungi, micaflara, meiafauna, bacteria, marine and terrestrial animals, birds, insects, finfish and shellfish.

Direct and indirect products from the mangroves form the basis of mangrove - dependent economic activities vital to the lives of the coast villagers. Products, which are directly obtained from the mangrove system, are firewaad, charcaal, boat building, dhaw- mats, canstructian waod (for poles and posts) Mangroves have been used by local people for centuries as traditional medicine, cattle fodder and honey productions.

Ecologically, mangroves are paramount importance in:

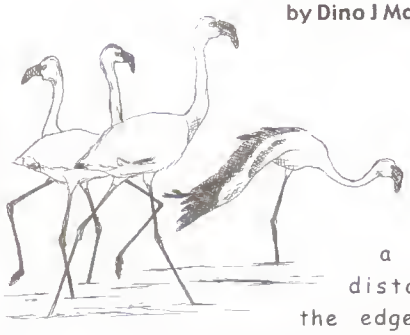
(a) providing habitats for fish, prawns and other sea animals
(b) trapping, concentrating and recycling nutrients
(c) protecting coastlines from erasian
(d) supporting birds and ather wildlife
(e) scientific research
(f) supporting recreational activities (ecotourism)

In many places at the Kenyan coast, mangroves have been exploited, replaced by prawn farming, rice cultivation, solar saltpans, aquaculture, ponds, charcoal production ar simply for large-scale removal for firewood.

In the East African region, ecological changes, uncontrolled exploitation by people, uncoordinated and insufficient conservation measures and inadequate policies have all contributed to the present situation in which the survival of the mangrove ecosystem in danger!

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

by Dino J Martins



From a distance, the edges af Lake Bagoria simmer with innumerable lesser flamingas. The grunts and cackling of the flamingas are pierced by the shrill call of an African Fish Eagle. From the dry, speckled hills, the eagle, boldly coloured, swaaps out. He rises on powerful wing beats then dives into the pink crowd. The flamingos, startled, slowly move out, but, surprisingly, none of them take flight. The eagle plunges inta their massed ranks and emerges with a struggling bird. He alights an the share and devaurs his meal. Puffs af pink feathers drift back over the lake.

All alang the share, Tawny Eagles, Wahlberg's Eagles, ather Fish Eagles and opportunistic baboons are all gorging themselves on hapless flamingos. And with each act of predation, the flamingos seem mare resigned and less disturbed. Have they simply given up on trying to escape? Or do they simply nat care abaut the lasses to predatars? The answers ta these questians are actually more complicated.

Where escape from predation is difficult, or well nigh impossible, simply being part of a large group provides a degree of safety through reducing any ane individual's chances of becoming prey. Therefore, as there is little chance af escaping, the flamingas stay bunched together in the hope that "it won't be me this time!" Given the success af the predators, fleeing is simply a waste of energy, each bird simply selfishly tries to bunch itself amongst others.

Many species of animals, ranging from schooling fish to nesting weaverbirds, choose a crowd to hide in. Living in a group also ensures communal access to food as well as synchranaus breeding apportunities. There are mare than a few benefits to be derived from being just another face in the crowd!

CONGRATULATIONS!

CONGRATULATIONS KENVO & DEE!

KENVO DOES IT AGAIN!

In February '02, the Important Bird Areas Site Support Group at Kikuyu Escarpment Forest, the Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO) was awarded the £ 20,000 follaw-up award by the British Petroleum (BP) Conservation Programme.

KENVO originally won a BP award of £ 5,000 in the year 2000 to conduct surveys at Gatamaiyu forest.

The current award, the highest award by the BP Programme, will follow-up on KENVO's initial BP wark and help the graup ta canduct an autreach programme.

REUTERS FOUNDATION & IUCN 2001 MEDIA AWARDS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM

From 6 global regians, 240 entries from 58 countries, Dee Raymer was a winner, amongst six finalists, for the English speaking Africa and Middle East regian.

Queen Noor af Jordan, Patron af IUCN, presented the awards to the six regional winners in Berlin in early December, in the global awards ceremany. She alsa announced that the *overall global winner* was Dee, for an *Ecoforum* article 'Water, Water Everywhere' advocating use of constructed wetlands in enviranmentally friendly wastewater management!

Dee is a Nature Kenya member and was founding Chairperson af Succulenta, a committee of Nature Kenya, and served on the EANHS Executive Committee for 3 years in that capacity.

RENEWALS

BECOME A SPONSOR!

Nature Kenyo programmes need your support – *renew as a Sponsor member* @ 3000/- Thonk you!

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

BIRD RINGING

Meet at the Museum, Nairobi Batanic Garden, at 7:00 a.m. every Thursday.

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the Natianal Museum, Nairobi, car park at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday af every manth, **i.e. 21 April**. The members decide where ta ga. Bring lunch

TREE WALK

Guided Tree Walks in the Arbaretum an the last Manday, i.e. **29 April from 9:30 a.m.** Meet at the FONA affices beside the Girl Guides HQ. *Thase wha are nat members af FONA ar Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee an arrival at the gate.*

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and araund Nairabi. Meet at the Natianal Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. *Thase who are not members can get temparary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable an arrival at the car park.*

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuka Sakake Forest Guides Assaciatian is on the first Saturday af each month i.e. **6 April, at 6:30 a.m.** fram the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per persan.

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends af Fart Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday af each manth i.e. **20 April, at 4:00 p.m.** Please call Marlene Reid an (011) 491 648

DECLARATION

Nature Kenya daes nat accept any respansibility whatsaever in respect af negligence af any af its staff, valunteers ar members arganising the autings/trips ar for any lass, injury, death ar damage ta praperty.

APRIL DIARY

Sat 6	ASF Birdwalks
Man 15	Dragonfly video & talk
Sat 20	FFJ Birdwalk
Sun 21	Sunday Birdwatch
Mon 29	Tree Walk
Tue 23 - 30	Fundamentals af Ornithalagy caurse

Birdwalks every Wednesday Morning

Bird ringing every Thursday Marning

Editor, **Catherine Ngarachu**

World Birdwatch '01 Highlights

BirdLife World bird festival WORLD BIRDWATCH 6-7 October 2001

Coast Area: **African Pygmy Goose, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Southern Banded Snake Eagle, Brown Noody, White-fronted Plover, Bohms Spinetail , African Broadbill** and all the Sokoke -specials (except the Spotted Ground Thrush): - the **Amani Sunbird, East Coast Akalat, Clarke's Weaver, Sokoke Scops Owl** ond **Sokoke Pipit** seen by three Arabuko-Sokoke teams, which covered the forest and nearby coastal sites suchas Mida Creek and Sabaki R. Mouth **Allen's Gallinule** and **Spotted Thick-knee** in *Nguuni*, Mombasa area

Noirobi Areo: **African Cuckoo Hawk** (in the forest patch near Langata Gate entrance to *Noirobi Nationol Pork* and **Yellow-throated Sandgrouse** ot Athi Dam also in the park **Baillon's Crake** ot Peponi Dom, *Kohowa Sukari*, near Nairobi, **Grey-olive Greenbul, Purple-crested Turoco** ond **African Finfoot** at *Blue Posts Hotel* in Thika

Somburu Shaba Circuit: **Palm-nut Vulture**, at the *Ewasa Nyiro River* Somburu ond **Williams's Lark** in *Shoba*

Marich Pass: **Heuglin's Courser, Western Violet-backed Sunbird** ond **Boran Cisticola**

Mwea National Reserve: **Gambaga Flycatcher, Olivaceous Warblers** (first record of the flycatcher in this Quorter Squore Degree)

Hinde's Babblers in *Mukurweini Volleys*, Central Kenya

Shorpe's Longclaw in *Kinangap Plateau*

Great Blue Turaco, Waller's Starling ond **Viellot's Black Weaver** *South Nandi Forest*

Grey-crested Helmet shrike in *Croter Loke Sonctuory* and its environs

Rosy-patched, Grey-headed and **Sulphur-breasted Bush shrikes, Eurasian Golden Oriole** and **Hunter's Sunbird** in *Tsovo*

Endemic bird species seen: **Sharpe's Longclaw, Taita Thrush, Taita Apalis, Turner's Eremomela, Taita White-eye, Clarke's Weaver, Hinde's Babbler**

Bird Hotline

Please note the records below ore unconfirmed

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Rogengni, Bondo/ Jonuory* ringed as a young bird July 2000 at Gulf of Bothnia, west coast Finlond (7134 kms from Bondo) reported in The East African Standard 18 Jan pg 32

Pallid Harrier, Montagu's Harrier, Eurasian Marsh Harrier *Embokosi Ploins Dom, Noirobi NP/ Morch* Chris Hill

120 **Abdim's Storks,** 4 **White Storks, Melanistic Gabar Goshawk** *Olorgesoilie & environs/ Morch* George Eshiomwato

Maccoa Duck *Sangare Ronch/ Februory* Philip & Ros Hechle, Patrick & Karen Plumbe

Common Button Quail, Marsh Owl, African Cuckoo *Nairabi N P/ Februory* Bernd de Bruijn, Jan Joost, Margreet Van Den Burg

Upcher's Worbler, Rufous Bush Chat, Irania *Water point, Oltepesi/ Februory* Itai Shanni, Bernd de Bruijn, Shoilesh Patel, Bernard Chege, George Eshiamwata

Eurasian Honey Buzzard *Arbaretum/ February* & Rosslyn River Garden Centre/ March Wednesday Morning Birdwalk

Northern Anteater Chat, Jackson's Widowbird *ILRI Nairobi/ Februory* Wednesday Morning Birdwolk

female **Northern Shoveler** *Ark Woterhole,* **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Naro Moru/ Jonuory* Tony Frere

2 **Palm-nut Vultures** *Seredupi* **Wahlberg's Eage pale morph, Lammergeier** *Lake Porodise, Mt Marsabit/ Januory* Dieter & Wendy Stonley

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